

## Wisconsin Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2015 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

### BOARD:

Chair – Justin Vollmar	Co-Chair – Denise Johnson	Secretary – Nicole Everson
Dr. Karl Nollenberger	Tracy Haas	Steve Smart
Vacant	Vacant	Vacant

### EX-OFFICIO:

Billy Mauldin		
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### ODHH (Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing) STAFF MEMBERS:

Dan Milliken	Amber Mullet	Melani Kaplan	Bette Mentz-Powell
Carly Bieri	Nancy Harbison	Chantel Young	
Caroline Ludka	Jennifer Koehn		

**BOARD PRESENT:** Steve Smart, Nicole Everson, Justin Vollmar, Dr. Karl Nollenberger, Denise Johnson, Billy Mauldin

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dan Milliken, Melani Kaplan, Amber Mullet, Carly Bieri, Chantel Young and Jennifer Koehn

**GUEST:** Tom O'Connor

**CAPTIONIST:** Rosie Coulthart     **INTERPRETERS:** Carly Bieri and Sara Miller

### 10:00 AM MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

**UPDATE:** Communication in regards to vacant seats on the council has been made with the Governor's office. One interest on council, waiting on response. We have not heard on persons with disability council as to whether Justin, ODHH representative, is approved.

**MARCH MEETING MINUTES:** Corrections needed as follows. Tom sent application to the governor and waiting for reply, not that Amber did it. Separate the board, staff and visitors when listing present attendees. Also, Justin did not 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion for the last minutes. Looked back and it was Nicole. Correct spelling of Shawntel to Chantel and Miliken to Milliken.

**ACTION:** Nicole to amend minutes with above corrections. Once amended, minutes to be posted in sharepoint file.

**MOTION:** Dr. Karl motioned corrected minutes, Nicole 2<sup>nd</sup> and all in favor; motion passes.

**ACTION:** Melani to change the name on the sharepoint file from CDHH to Sharepoint.

### DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- Deputy Administrator for the Division of Long Term Care (DLTC), Beth Wroblewski, is retiring after 25 years. She will now be the Director of Employment Resources, Inc., an agency based on focusing on people with disabilities. Curtis Cunningham will be replacing her position. He will be overseeing the DLTC. Bryan Shoup will be the Division Administrator. Bryan will oversee Curtis who will now oversee Carrie Moelke.
- Joint Finance Committee has approved the merger of the DLTC and the Division of Health Care Access and Accountability (DHCAA.) The infrastructure and finances of this division has not been finalized. Approximate time frame for merger is 2 years. ODHH will still be a part of this division.

- Shawnee Thomas has left her position as the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Specialist for the Northwest region for ODHH as of May 15th. This position to be announced is a staff position, will be vacant and located in the Eau Claire area (centrally location and has an office in state building.) Will have to go through the steps of Human Resources before the position is released. There will be a host location in Wausau for the Northwest representative
- ODHH is also looking to hire a deafblind specialist position with the focus on deafblind initiative in the future. This will be a contracted position and hoping the creation of this position comes to fruition. To be announced.
- Assistant Program Technology Coordinator position was open and is going through the proper hiring process. Hopeful to be able to announce a new employee in our office soon. Meta was responsible for TAPP/TEPP program and is no longer with our office. The position has expanded to the Program Technology Coordinator.
- ODHH goal/objective is to increase awareness and the scope of services that ODHH provide for deafblind persons statewide. If given the green light on a deafblind specialist contracted position, this person can focus solely on deafblindness.
- Due to confusion, Dan Milliken addressed the following: there were some preliminary assumptions that there would be a hiring freeze due to the budget with the governor's office, however they have allowed us to request for that position to be filled. At that time we had a 50/50 chance that we'd be able to have this position filled. Conversations about money, funding and so forth was had and the office was then given the go ahead to hire. The Department has decided that any positions under one year that have been vacant would be able to be filled. So the application process is actually in the hands of HR.
- There were 5 regions now reduced to 4 regions. The funding for the 5<sup>th</sup> region was contracted. 4 of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist are state and the 5<sup>th</sup> specialist is contracted. When the contracted person retired, the contracted position was then eliminated. There is now only 4.

**DHS DIRECTOR CARRIE MOELKE:** Carrie Moelke: Discussed what is happening on the bureau level, the division overview and the major initiatives that DHS/ODHH is working on.

- Carrie Moelke is the Bureau Director of Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources. ODHH is one of the offices within the Bureau. There is also the Office on Aging, The office for Resource Center Development, ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Center), OBVI (Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired) and lastly the Office for People with Physical Disabilities (One person directs that office and that is Dan Johnson.)
- Carrie has spent the last two years getting to know the staff, management team, and the work in the bureau. She has been exploring ways that we can be better coordinated. There is a great understanding that there is a large population in Wisconsin with older adults and hearing loss and/or vision loss. Just by nature of us emerging in these collaborative efforts we've already seen some really great growth in terms of enhancing the general services across the bureau that we provide on the ground.
- In addition to a bureau, we provide staff support and participate in six different councils, including the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind Council. Carrie has noticed strong differences between the various councils. Carrie would like to see broader consistencies in terms of how we understand and how the Bureau/State uses the councils. Also with the information the Bureau receives from the councils and what to do with the information. It's critical in terms of Carrie Moelke's philosophies that the Bureau is getting feedback and input from consumer voices. That this information goes through the proper channels all the way up to the Governor. Carrie would like to know what the main issues are collectively. What systems can we really change? What can we tackle so that the Bureau can make a difference?

- Carrie suggested we devise a state plan similar to the council for physical disabilities. They draw out the main issues for people and what the recommendations for making change in those areas.
- Also, other councils take home homework if you will to the council member's communities and constituents and get feedback. Carrie believes we are in a position to make some really significant changes. If we hear about an issue, really the next thing is what are we going to do?
- Examples of ways we can really work together to make these changes.
  - Network with organizations that can help support
  - Hold a stakeholders summit pulling people together and plan for what can be done to make an effective plan.
  - Implement the plan and follow up.
  - Prioritize your plans.
- Some of the priority issues at the Bureau is mental health and deafblind issues.

Carrie highlighted some great work going on with in the Bureau but at the same time the Bureau shares the mission to really improve all of the systems in the Bureau. She believes all of the systems need some solid change to ensure that the needs of people who are deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind are considered. Carrie believes in her perspective, that the deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind have been neglected in terms of readiness, preparedness, friendliness and support.

Carrie asked each of us to express our concerns as a council, our concerns as follows:

- Advocacy, Awareness and Education for Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind.
- More support for ILC's in each area
- More staff/support at ODHH
- Community perspective vs. ODHH office perspective varies. DHS refers to ODHH as a resource center where as the community refers to ODHH as an advocacy center. The community sees ODHH as a center for advice, services and support.
- ODHH is a great agency, but does not have the capability to deal with the variety of specific needs and scope of services that is needed by the deaf community.
- Give more authority to ODHH to make decisions. ODHH is considered the low man on the totem pole because ODHH gets buried under bureaucracy and of importance. There is information gaps and services not being met. This is viewed by the Deaf community that ODHH is not doing their job. There is a misconception amongst the community as to the role of ODHH.
- In the past ODHH actually provided services, direct services and now they don't? The Deaf community feels the council should be able to influence the office more and wishes the office had more clout and authority. Not sure what happened over the years with services. By eliminating what ODHH can and cannot do gives limited ability to really address some needs and concerns within the community. Wish we could have that back.
- Work on DVR issues in regards to Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind issues.
- Enforce goals made by the council (which is hard because they are volunteer positions.)
- The council needs to support Dan and ODHH at the same time support ODHH where things need to improve, support performance enhancing and seeing what we can do to support them more internally.
- Better communication between council members throughout the year, not just at meetings so we don't go back to square one.
- Like to see some changes in the government system and have it improve. So when someone resigns from the council we have a quick turn-around to fill that position, it's too often that the vacant position is left empty for 4-5 meetings.
- Support on Legislative activity and how that works. Guiding us through the right channels.

- Effective training for our council members and for legislative meetings and so forth. (Carrie mentioned that the aging department has training/curriculum on how to self-advocate. We should utilize their model/tools.)
- Have someone keep representing ODDH council at different Joint Committee meetings and so forth with legislatures.
- Data collection amongst the community (has already been implemented per Carrie Moelke)
- Making sure all communication is available via video logs. (Per Carrie, vlogs are being pursued and worked on within the office.)
- ODDH needs to be more transparent
- Awareness and education about Cochlear Implants.

(Carrie Moelke also discussed the concept of town hall meetings. Understands that we are volunteers, so maybe a joint meeting with ODDH once a year or every other year in five different parts of the state and do some regional/national sorts of listening sessions that would include us but would include the council as well? Then we can hear from a broader group and then what arises from that is exactly what can go on your agendas for us to be working through together. Some suggested community events in place of town hall meetings to draw more attention to the community.)

- Have Cochlear Implants and Hearing Aids covered by insurance on a better scale.
- Hiring a note taker for our council meetings. It is a visual group and it is hard for anyone here to participate well if they are taking notes. It is challenging and would be of great assistance to our council.
- Helping the council be more impactful
- Expand ODDH to have an advocacy position; especially for general access and ability for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to live in this world.
- Breakdown communication barriers in our agencies such as ILC and ADRC's. Deaf, Hard of Hearing Impaired and Deafblind do not feel they have equal access to these programs.
- Change bylaws to include Cochlear Implant (CI) recipients. They are deaf with CI's. Not hard of hearing, or is a personal preference by each individual.
- Board members, such as Nicole, is willing to do any and all training needed to help Wisconsin grow and help with advocacy and legislative help.

ILC (Independent Living Centers,) how are they affiliated with the State? Per Carrie: ILC is contracted with the state and are part of the division, but within her Bureau. There will be some changes happening potentially with ILC's, their budget and the organization. Would like to see ILC's become a part of this Bureau. ILC's would be another great organization to have a solid partner with and the coordination with the ILC's would strengthen our need in the community.

## **LUNCH**

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)**

ODDH positions are as follows: Telecommunications Coordinator (TAPP Position), Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist for Northwest Region, and the third position is the Deafblind specialist Contracted. So 3 positions will be or are open.

- Dan attended a Newborn Screen Advisory Committee meeting and they published their 2013 annual report by Dr. Elizabeth Seegler, Audiologist and Chair of the Wisconsin Sound Beginnings. Focus is to be a one stop referral service for families, hospitals and clinics of newborns with hearing loss detection or inclusions. There seems to be a gap in follow-up from the newborn screening to the 3, 6 and 12 month checkups. There needs to be a connection for parents and professionals. In comparison to Minnesota at 97% follow-up, Wisconsin is at approximately 73%. Dr. Elizabeth is working on all community avenues of hearing, hard of hearing, deafblind, Deaf and CI's. There is not one more than the other.

- Deafblind services. Dan met with some representatives from the Helen Keller National Center, Laura Thomas and Bryan Yunashko. Bryan is the regional representative and an advocate.
- HKNC representatives shared information on how to bring more awareness and the scope of services they offer for Wisconsin residents. They have training, support and services available for individuals effected and for professionals. They also provide advocacy and ADA law training/information for individuals.
- Currently we only have one center of support for the Deafblind and that is located in Milwaukee. It is difficult to find SSP's (support service providers) or interveners. Carrie Moelke is in agreeance that we need more awareness and education statewide. Hence the reason for supporting a deafblind specialist position. This person would connect and work with our area ILC's, ADRC's, interpreting agencies, schools and in general statewide to work with our consumers. This person would also work closely with the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired.
- Also working on gathering information, support, professionals and consumers to conduct a deafblind summit hopefully by fall or early next year.
- Hearing Loop system: I talked to the bureau about expanding the hearing loop system in our ADRC's, but budget uncertainties is still in limbo. We have a total of 86 ADRC's, 72 county and 16 tribal offices. There is an uncertainty in knowing if ADRC's will increase or decrease in offices with the budget discussion. The directors of each ADRC's has expressed interest in installing these loop systems. It would show a model of standard of the state if each of our ADRC's had them installed.

Discussion in room about assistive listening devices. Denise has a closet full and is not sure what to do with them, but wants to make use of them. Melani shared that years ago they wanted to start a lending library for seniors or doctor's offices or counselors to loan out. That would be a system you could create Denise? Denise: I have worked with different agencies and UW Stout in lending equipment out and nothing. Thought that the deaf and hard of hearing specialist could utilize the equipment as they meet with new/past clients to try them out.

#### **AMBER FOLLOW UP on SERVICE FUND:**

Steve asked if the fiscal year-end is June 30<sup>th</sup>, is there any money left or have we run out? Amber stated, ODHH has narrowed the scope and priorities of using the service fund, along with following the Administrative Rules. This year we have plenty of funds available for the entire year and do not anticipate running out. Any extra funds left over, will be allocated to the next calendar year budget without any fear of losing it.

TAPP Program update by Amber and Dan:

- TAPP to administer more efficient and time sensitive process for recipients.
- Language for the TAPP program was established and passed in 1984 and has evolved since then. ODHH has also partnered with TEPP under the Public Service Commission. Each to be intended as stand-alone programs. It is critical to take a step back and look at our administrative rules and discuss with the Secretary of the Department, have the TAPP program go through the Administrative rules changes in the next couple of years. The rules change is more specify the process internally. The TAPP program states the person applying must be approved to have a hearing loss Deaf or hard of hearing by a licensed professional or by a deaf and hard of hearing coordinator. ODHH does not have a coordinator on staff, so we have to define what a

coordinator means. Overall, we have to look at how the law is written and see what changes need to be made.

- The budget for TAPP is 90,000 since 1985, which needs to change.
- ODHH understand is to partner with the TEPP program because of higher funding.
- ODHH goal is not to make changes to the program, but make the program stronger, so that the program is protected and it protects the people that ODHH serves.
- Last year ODHH received from 25,000 dollars from Carrie's budget to cover the deficit because ODHH has been in the hole and with increasing needs, we often started the new fiscal year in a hole. Therefore ODHH did not have the ability to meet their bid every year because ODHH was in the hole every year. Due to this problem, ODHH never knew if the 90,000 base was enough or sufficient to the cover the needs of the community because ODHH fiscal line was always in the hole. Because Carrie was able to cover our loss, we are able to start on a clean slate to have better tracking of where the office is at.
- Keep in mind the TEPP and TAPP are different. TEPP is telecommunication and TAPP is to help low income individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind to secure necessary communication equipment. The rule change would to assist in changing the limitations and restrictions to provide additional assistance, not limitations.

#### **MELANI'S UPDATE REPORT:**

- Connecting with WAD for emergency preparedness
- Working with WAD to present information around the state
- Complaints from community members in regards to fire alarms
  - Look into finding some type of support, figuring out how to get fire alarm support with the council, WAD and any other organization

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- Plan what was discussed with Carrie Moelke, she offered to come to a meeting again. Let's plan specific things we would like to do as a council and concerns. There are 2 councils that have their own budget.
  - Invite Carrie to 2 meetings per year.
  - Need to have a council plan and prioritize our needs
  - Vision for the council
  - The council needs a template of a state plan or platform
  - What does it really mean having a Wisconsin statutes for the Council advisory? What is the term, scope, what can the council do and not do?
  - Once state plan is created, then establish a strategy to complete the plans.
  - Dan and Carrie supported a plan and are willing to look over and advise on the concept and get us to the ending point.
  - Bullet point all of the council tangible suggestions that need to be worked on
  - Melani to add a page on the sharepoint site for our plan.

**ACTION:** Council to create an action plan and to initiate a plan by reviewing the action plans of other state councils. Nicole agreed to start the draft of the plan.

**MOTION:** Dr. Karl Motioned, Nicole Second Discussion had, motion approved.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve Tom access to our sharepoint website to see information we have as a council. Melani to send information to Tom to get him included with Sharepoint.

**MOTION:** Dr. Karl Motioned, Nicole Second, Discussion had, motion approved.

**ACTION:** Dan to find a copy of the action plan from the other councils to share with us. Dan to work on with Melani and send an email to us. No motion needed.

**ACTION:** Melani to add a page on our sharepoint site for our council plan.

**ANNUAL REPORT:** It was mentioned that the last annual report was shared and printed 2012. Wanted to see if ODHH is willing to share those again? Dan is hoping to have the annual report for 2014 out by this fall.

**ACTION:** Dan to share report at September meeting if available.

**ODHH NET:** Concern for the net only coming out every 6 months. Dan shared that the office will have the newsletter come out quarterly. There is a communication policy we have to follow and must be approved before release. We are working on a more fluid system. Facebook has been brought up with Carrie Moelke, discussion between Dan and Carrie is in favor of Facebook for up-to-date communication. However, due to the level of administrative process, we may not be able to get the information quick enough for the public.

**CERTIFIED DEAF INTERPRETERS:** Does the council want to promote the use of CDI's? We encourage individuals to use CDI's. In some states it is a law to provide a CDI if requested. Is this something we want to consider as a state? Is this something the interpreting services fund could cover? F

- The service fund is access communication services, this includes interpreting services, caption and so forth. The guidelines are written to support effective communication services. If the CDI has a licensure from DSPS, then the service fund can pay. Again must look at the priority need of those services.
- PIE has a total of 6-7 CDI's and a few deaf interpreters that are not certified.
- Need to advocate more for CDI's and the importance of CDI's in professional settings.
- Suggested that the service fund clause be changed so the language includes the support of CDI's. Also that the language explains more about CDI's.
- ODHH sometimes is a mediator for both interpreter agencies and professional services, because we can explain the law and definition of the different types of interpreters. We do not sell a service, so most agencies understand what we are trying to explain. We do not promote one way or another, but explain the need and why. We promote best practices act.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

**LOGOS for the COUNCIL:** Nicole provided a few options. Suggestions made, no red, black and grey. Make the logo blind and visually impaired friendly. Such as the colors navy blue and gold/yellow. To remove the wording of the council and just have a picture logo. Top left was mentioned as a favorite of some. Take the look of the bottom left and take the third one on the left side, it has two colors; maybe add a third color to represent each community we support.

**ACTION:** Dan to check with administration on rules on the logo for the council. Also to see if the state would provide a logo for our council, then it would be approved by administration. We have a new point of contact, Julie Highland, Communication Specialist. Dan will ask if we can design or own, if can resemble the ODHH logo, if there are rules for the logo or if they will create a logo for our council. Nicole to look and see if other councils in other states have logos and see if it's something we could work with.

**COUNCIL WEBSITE:** Platform is changing. Council to provide a logo for the website. Migration to new site begins July 1<sup>st</sup>. All councils are to follow a similar platform for their websites.

**INTERPRETING SERVICES AFTER HOURS:** Denise did not get all of the responses yet from the agencies in regards to their policies on after hour rules for interpreters. Gathering information from each agency on how their information is dispersed to the community. What is considered emergency? Denise also tried to get information on each agency on what they consider a qualified interpreter and most were hesitant to share that information.

**ACTION:** Denise to hopefully have a finished report to share with us at the next council meeting.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS & PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- WAD Conference coming up. June 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline and spring rate is 175.00. So register.
- State to reduce budget related to each county cost for interpreters. Concerns about covering the cost of interpreters. Budget is still open on the floor, so we will see what happens.
- Wisconsin School for the Deaf Superintendent hiring procedure. Justin has been active in the process the last three months so that we have good candidates. We have advertised to parent groups and the deadline is May 18<sup>th</sup> for them to receive applications. June they will be doing interviews. Justin will keep us informed on the process and outcome.

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**ACTION:** Justin to bring a card for council to sign for a retired member of the council.

**ADJOURNED at 3:39 PM**